8/2/73
8/4/73

Glanze, Bantam Books

Dear Walter,

Were I a man not the captive of his beliefs, I'd have been well on my way to riches in 1936, when I was, with some success, investigating the Chrysler Corp. for the Senate and had a most attractive offer to me.

Were I a man easily discouraged, I'd have said "Oh, shit" when I could do nothing with two obvious concepts it took some years to bring to pass, the Hammond Organ, which I described to a musician cousin long before it was invented, and the new fandangle in the blind landing of airplanes. (The first in 1930, the second in 1929. In those years I was a bug on what is today known as electronics.)

And were I not a determined man, I'd not be writing you to chide you for not responding to my last letter. In it I told you I had some really sensational stuff that had not yet come to light. I asked you to ask Marc if the curse on me were - should I say is?- all encompassing.

Had I not conquered the demon rum in my reporting days, I'd have gotten drunk today. That is, after returning from the garage that overhauled the starter on my old car, which has also persevered, through 110,000 miles. As you know, if I am not able to drive, I might as well be where Stanley met Livingston.

I had two hunches that what I have been sitting on for a year or more might leak out a bit today, in the Ervin hearings; and that if it did, it would not be official intent. I was right on both.

Some of it did, by blunder, not intent. Until I see the morning papers, I'll not know how it is treated or where it leads. It is only a little. I don't know whether the papers will figure out the rest and if they do, if they'll pursue.

I do not know how closely those of you who are gainfully employed can follow the story of the decade, or the decade less one year. But I also can't write you a book now. So, instead, I'll tell you that Nixon had a connection with E. Howard Hunt, the man who is going crazy in jail, one of his two Watergate honchos, more than a decade ago. To this I'll add, hoping that it will not be broadcast, the Marine Corps Commandant, Four-Star General Robert E. Cushman, who was today's last witness before the Watergate committee, while admitting he knew Hunt, did not tell all. He actually shared an office with him in CIA. Cushman volunteered little. He was Nixon's Bay of Pigs man when Hunt was the CIA's Bay of Pigs political operative. Are you beginning to get a glimmer of how Hunt could - and did- blackmail Nixon? Nixon was then vice president, Cushman a mere colonel. What Cushman did not say - and wasn't asked - is that Nixon was also Ike's White House action officer on the Bay of Pigs.

This is only the beginning. Naturally, I keep my fingers crossed and my hopes up. As you realize, I have not told you the rest of what I've so long had that the Pulitzer reporters didn't get (I actually offered it to them and they didn't understand it) It is not that I don't trust you. It is that there is no purpose in my taking the time.

Here I am at 60, getting up to write at 5 a.m. so I can follow the hearings, and going until late at night. And there is Bantam, spending a sum I don't know but I am sure would make a wonderful year for me on the same subject, only to throw it away. It doesn't make sense, I am bold enough to suggest, for Bantam to do this.

All this stuff that has come out on Nixon's personal crookedness, with his property? I can send you a carbon of where I offered the leads to the man you had under contract. He has a fine record, but he could not understand it. I was onto this long, long ago. I knew of it not later than the year Ike and he were re-elected, the beginning of it, that is. This "new" stuff on Hunt? I can produce my carbons to the Pulitzer winners, and they did nothing. Yeah, I know, Wordsworth said it long ago.

Any way, if you did or did not speak to Marc, as I asked, please, do, let me know. I am the perpetual optimist who hopes that even the blackest curses can be lifted. I have been too busy trying to work to shop around. But I do have a viable format, and all Bantam's money couldn't buy that. And nothing has yet happened to change the book in any way. What also has not happened is the kicker that can permit a definitive outline. So, I'm plodding along as I believe I told you I would. As things clarify a bit, I have evolved a formula that permits writing in which I anticipate none but editorial changes

should be necessary. Because I start the day so early, I have about 25,000 words from the front, beginning with the Foreword. I also have large hunks of later sections written. I write them when they are in my mind. I don't have time to outline what I can't really outline anyway. If I could, I'd probably have a European contract. If there are no personal emergencies, I'll get much caught up when this damned committee takes its vacation. Meanwhile, I have to keep up with them. Not only for what they produce but to keep up with the part of them that is disguisedly doing Nixon's dirty work. (I have already begun writing that part. I began it before it began, as I also began writing his counterattack before he launched it. Maybe you haven't seen it yet? You will!) They have, of course, come up with an abundance of detail. Little of it was, except for this intimate detail, unknown to me. The only surprise since we last spent a few minutes together is that our Glorious Leader bugged everybody. This he will convert to an asset, using it to divert almost everybody from almost everything else. Except for dramatic self- description, it need mean nothing, for if anyone ever hears any of the tapes (he has packed the Supreme Court), who will know if the tapes are pristine? And what they can say is already available, in essence, anyway.

Long ago, my painful experiences taught me that the one role I must serve is that of a man who makes a record for the future. If I don't like that role, I see no other probability. This book is written with that foremost in my mind. It will thus be a longer ms than I would like. However, I think it will also be one easily cut. I seek, above all, to give this context and meaning. Bantam didn't contract such a book. The Post boys wont write one. No other serious one is under contract, to the best of my limited knowledge.

There are some limitations on my productivity I wish I could overcome. Three days a week I must take my wife to and from temporary employment. (This has all been very depressing, figuratively and literally, to her.) That is a bigger hunk out of a working day that may be apparent. I can't afford to hire a kid to mow my grass and weeds. With all this mountainside, that is lots of work for me, with old, second-hand equipment. This is an area in which copperheads and rattlers are not that uncommon. The fact is that I engage in this probable futility when I should be mowing. A sum that would be small to most of the people I know would release me from this. I had hopes that the Germans would come up with it. I have had no word since I saw you. Day before yesterday or so I wrote to ask the score, not that silence isn't a good indication. ...

In May Jerry told me he would put me in touch with a friend about to return from the west coast. I nudged him in early June, but he has not responded. It doesn't tell me that Jerry is other than a fine guy. But it does disappoint that he couldn't take the few minutes to say he had changed his mind, or the friend wasn't interested, or whatever.

By the way, I'm writing this book as an intelligence analyst would. I was one once. If it does not provide more than air on which to live, it nonetheless is a considerable comfort to have all the dated notes that are so correct, parts of a book written before they came to pass. It was not, I ask you to believe, an intellectual indulgence. It was two other things, after I stopped trying to help others and started writing. First, I do forget, and it was to limit forgetting. And then it was a test of my sharpness and accuracy. It is good to know that my bones only are stiffening.

I must get to work. Don't be embarrassed to say that it is hopeless. But do tell me if it is. Then I will see if and how I can shop around. If I haven't even though of how, I will.

Best,